

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
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P 151615Z MAY 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1361
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 01951

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORC, UNGA, PARM, PBOR, US, UR, CH
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRC COUNSELOR CHOU NAN

REF: USUN 1948

1. FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF BUSINESS WITH PRC COUNSELOR CHOU NAN MAY 12 INSTRUCTED STATE 120790, THE CONVERSATION WITH POLMIN TURNED TO A MORE GENERAL DISCUSSION TOUCHING ON A NUMBER OF OTHER SUBJECTS, INCLUDING U.S. AND SOVIET POSITIONS IN THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON DISARMAMENT (SSOD), SOVIET INITIATIVES IN AFRICA, CUBA, AND SOVIET/PRC RELATIONS.

2. SSOD: CHOU PROBED INTENSIVELY FOR AN INDICATION OF THE INITIATIVES THE U.S. MIGHT PROPOSE IN THE SSOD, LIKE- LY SOVIET INITIATIVES, AND THE RESULTS OF THE LEONARD DIS- CUSSIONS IN MOSCOW. POLMIN RESPONDED THAT U.S. POSITIONS HAD NOT BEEN MADE FINAL, BUT HE SUGGESTED THAT CONCERNING THE LEONARD TALKS AND OTHER MATTERS THE PRC MISSION SHOULD APPROACH LEONARD NEXT WEEK FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION. CHOU SAID THEIR SOUNDINGS, INCLUDING A DIRECT APPROACH TO THE SOVIETS, PRODUCED ONLY A VAGUE SOVIET RESPONSE THAT THEIR
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INITIATIVES WERE LAID OUT IN BREZHNEV'S STATEMENT. CHOU SPECULATED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD MAKE A DETERMINED RUN AT WHAT HE TERMED THE "PROPAGANDA VALUE" OF THE NEUTRON BOMB ISSUE, BUT HE JUDGED THAT THE U.S. DECISION HAS BARRED SIGNIFICANT SOVIET EXPLOITATION OF IT. WHEN POLMIN REMARKED THAT THE LEONARD CONVERSATIONS IN MOSCOW DEALT PRIMARILY WITH MACHINERY QUESTIONS, CHOU PRESSED FOR

FURTHER DETAILS (WHICH POLMIN WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE) AND SPECULATED THAT THE SOVIETS NO DOUBT ARE MAINTAINING A MUCH MORE RIGID LINE ON THESE QUESTIONS THAN THE U.S. CHOU SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT THE "SUSPICION", PARTICULARLY AMONG THIRD WORLD DELEGATIONS, THAT THERE IS BROAD COLLUSION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION ON MANY OF THE SSOD QUESTIONS. HE CONCLUDED THIS SUBJECT WITH A STANDARD WARNING THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED IN ANY OF THE DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS.

3. AFRICA: CHOU BROACHED THE SITUATION IN AFRICA, CHARGING THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS "DISASTROUSLY" WEAK IN ITS RESPONSE, OR LACK OF RESPONSE, TO PREMEDITATED SOVIET CHALLENGES IN AFRICA. BEGINNING WITH ANGOLA, AND NOW EMERGING IN THE HORN, THE SOVIET UNION IS PURPOSELY TESTING THE U.S. AND FINDING THAT IT NOW HAS "A CLEAR FIELD" AND WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND ITS POWER IN THE CONTINENT. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT WHAT CHINA WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE U.S. DO AGAINST THE SOVIET MOVES IN THE HORN, CHOU SAID THE U.S. SHOULD TAKE A STRONG STANCE, INSISTING THAT THE SOVIETS AND THEIR ALLIES CANNOT INTRUDE INTO AFRICAN AFFAIRS IN THE WAY THEY ARE DOING, PROVIDING OPEN AND "MASSIVE" MILITARY SUPPORT TO THE SOMALIS AND OTHERS WHO WILL FIGHT THE SOVIETS, AND CALLING BILATERAL PRESSURES INTO PLAY AGAINST THE SOVIETS. HE SAID THE PRC IS THE ONLY MAJOR POWER THAT HAS BEEN OUTSPOKEN IN ITS CONFIDENTIAL

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TOTAL OPPOSITION TO THE SOVIET COURSE IN AFRICA, AND CHARGED THAT THE U.S. HAS REFRAINED FROM TAKING A FORTHRIGHTLY NEGATIVE POSITION PUBLICLY. HE SAID THE PRC'S RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA ARE "VIABLE", MAINLY INVOLVING A NUMBER OF SMALL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROJECTS. HE OBSERVED THAT RELATIONS ARE NOT "INTIMATE", BUT THE PRC JUDGED IT USEFUL TO MAINTAIN A PRESENCE IN THE AREA. HE REJECTED THE PRACTICAL USEFULNESS OF A CALL FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN ERITREA, BELIEVING INSTEAD THAT THE SOVIET DRIVE HAS TO BE FACED MILITARILY BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE CONSIDERED.

4. CUBA: CHOU CITED CUBA AS ANOTHER CASE WHERE THE U.S. HAS DONE NOTHING AGAINST SOVIET EFFORTS TO EXPAND THEIR POSITIONS. HE ASKED WHY THE U.S. HAS NOT REACTED TO CLEAR INDICATIONS THE SOVIETS ARE STRENGTHENING THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE IN CUBA, OBVIOUSLY POSING A THREAT TO THE U.S. CHOU SAID THEY CONSIDER CUBA PURELY AS A SOVIET AGENT IN THE WORLD, COMPLETELY DOMINATED BY SOVIET POLICY OBJECTIVES.

5. PRC/SOVIET RELATIONS: CHOU TERMED THE SOVIET APOLOGY

FOR THE RECENT BORDER INCURSION SURPRISING AND PUZZLING. HE SAID THE BASIC QUESTION IS WHETHER THIS UNUSUAL SOVIET RESPONSE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TACTICAL OR STRATEGIC IN ITS IMPLICATION. CHOU SAID HE PERSONALLY CONSIDERED IT ONLY TACTICAL IN MEANING, BUT HE COULD NOT OFFER AN EXPLANATION FOR IT -- BEYOND THE SPECULATION THAT IT WAS SOMEHOW RELATED TO THE FORTHCOMING VISIT TO PEKING OF PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT BRZEZINSKI. HE SAID THE PRC KNOWS THE SOVIETS BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THE WORLD AND COMPLETELY DISTRUSTS THEM, NO MATTER WHAT THEY DO. HE

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1362

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 01951

OFFERED THE ADVICE THAT THE U.S. SHOULD ADOPT THE CHINESE HARD LINE, ACCEPTING THE SOVIET CHALLENGES AS THEY ARISE WITHOUT THE WEAK U.S. FEAR OF "CONFRONTATIONS", OR ELSE THE U.S. WILL BE "OVERWHELMED" BY THE SOVIETS WITHIN A GENERATION OR TWO. HE CONCLUDED THAT U.S. FEAR OF CONFRONTATION DOES NOT SERVE WORLD INTERESTS. LEONARD

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